

THE CASE FOR

PRINT

MAGAZINES

SPECIAL CONTENT SECTION AS SEEN IN **ADWEEK**

MPA THE ASSOCIATION OF  
**MAGAZINE MEDIA**

# This Is Your Brain on Print

If you're reading this in print, chances are you're behaving differently and will be retaining the information differently than if you're scanning this on a screen. You're probably more engaged and less distracted. Feeling the pages is triggering neural responses that may be improving your comprehension.

There's been a lot of scientific research tapping into the print vs. digital debate. The MPA recently released "What Can Neuroscience Tell Us About Why Print Magazine Advertising Works?," a white paper summarizing the findings of nearly 150 peer-reviewed research papers, books and reports about how consumers' brains process paper-based information. While the evidence is still accumulating, the research suggests that the print paper platform itself is responsible for the high performance of magazine media.

So let's see the brain in action:

## READING ON PAPER IS SLOWER AND DEEPER

The preponderance of research comes to a similar conclusion—reading on a screen is faster and more superficial while reading on paper is slower and more deliberate. Digital readers tend to skim, scan and bounce—what researchers refer to as "horizontal" reading. They also note that digital readers are frequently "squirrelers" who hunt for nuggets to save and read later.

While the implications for advertising effectiveness have not been systematically studied, they do suggest that by being more deliberate with print, readers can be seduced to engage longer, putting themselves into the picture or fantasizing about the trip, the clothes or the car.

## PAPER-BASED READING BENEFITS FROM MORE FOCUSED ATTENTION

Digital readers multitask, often to the point of distraction—reading an article has to compete with other open windows, email alerts, sports scores, social updates, texts, digital ads and on and on. More than 20 separate studies found that this hyperlinked engagement leads to lower comprehension and recall.

## PAPER READERS COMPREHEND AND REMEMBER MORE

Speed is one thing; comprehension is another. Of 31 studies examined, 26 found higher comprehension when subjects read on paper instead of a screen. In many cases, paper-based readers apply better metacognitive strategies such as making connections or inferences and writing comments in the margin. This gives them a surer sense of what they've read.

## READING ON PAPER IS MULTISENSORY

There's much to be said about the tactility of print. When Norwegian researchers had two groups of 10th graders read identical texts on paper vs. screens, they found those who read on paper scored better on reading comprehension. The researchers pointed to what is known as the haptics of reading—the way people use touch and motor skills when they read, noting holding paper and turning pages creates different stimuli than scrolling text.

Neuroscientists believe that we use different parts of our brain to encode information that we see, hear or feel to the touch. People are more likely to grasp and remember information gathered through multiple platforms and multiple senses. Multisensory coding also gives you more recall triggers.

## PRINT ADVERTISING MAKES PRODUCTS MORE DESIRABLE

Neuroscience studies find that ads on physical materials generate more emotional processing—partly because of motor processing of multisensory consumption—than do digital ads. A recent study from Temple University neuroscientists found that people were more likely to remember an ad and its context if they saw it in print than if they saw it on screen. Neural

brain mapping backed this up. In fact, the print-exposed group showed significantly higher activity in the brain's ventral striatum, an area associated with reward processing and desirability. Now that sounds like a marketer's dream.

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*This is part 1 of a three-part weekly series examining magazine advertising today, sponsored by MPA. Part 2 will look at using print magazines in your media mix. All of this and more will be presented at the 2016 American Magazine Media Conference, February 1-2, 2016. Details at [magazine.org](http://magazine.org).*



# Print In the Mix

Research shows that print is the cornerstone of successful multi-platform campaigns

It's a multi-channel world and brands need to reach out to consumers across a myriad of print, broadcast and online platforms to get their message across. But what role does each channel play? What is the optimal media mix? And how should buyers be allocating their budgets to get the biggest bang?

To get a clear understanding of how effective print is in today's market, MPA—The Association of Magazine Media brought in Millward Brown to conduct a meta-analysis of nearly 100 ad effectiveness studies commissioned by advertisers between 2007 and 2015. These ranged across advertiser categories and brands and generated survey responses from more than 250,000 respondents.

The results looked at how ads on different media channels affected consumers as they moved through the purchase funnel, with specific focus on metrics measuring brand awareness, ad comprehension and recall, and persuasion. It analyzed how each of the three major media—print, TV and online—perform separately and in combination with each other.

So what did the meta-analysis find? Here are some of the key results:

## PRINT PUSHES PURCHASING

Print advertising led to the greatest increases in the metrics closest to purchasing behavior: brand favorability and purchase intent. Print ad exposure generated lifts that were seven percentage points higher than those for online and three percentage points higher than those for TV. Among key verticals, these results were mirrored in the automotive, entertainment and financial services segments.



## PRINT CAN BE THE CATALYST

When advertisers used print in combination with other platforms, they were most successful in raising outcome metrics. It's probably no surprise that in most cases the print/online/TV combination had more powerful effects than lesser combinations. Among the two-medium combinations, print/TV was especially effective across almost all of the outcome metrics measured. Surprisingly, the print/TV combination outperformed the online/TV combination across all relevant metrics, and in some areas (such as aided awareness, brand favorability and purchase intent), the print/TV combination produced deltas that were twice as large as online/TV.

## NEED TO BOOST TV OR ONLINE RECALL? TRY PRINT

Adding print to a TV schedule actually helped consumers recall the TV ads they had seen. Exposure to TV and print in ad campaigns improved consumers' ability to correctly associate the advertised brands with their respective advertising messages. Similarly, when it comes to online ad awareness lift, the print/online combination outperformed the online/TV combination by four percentage points.

## PEOPLE DON'T TIRE OF PRINT ADS

Finally, the study sought to determine optimum ad exposure by channel. While TV and online showed diminishing returns after four exposures, print continued to improve ad awareness and persuasion metric at higher (five-plus) frequencies. Ad awareness was higher for print at all exposure frequencies. Message association, brand favorability and purchase intent all continued to show increased growth at the five-plus exposure frequencies for print.

Ultimately, print is more effective in multi-platform campaigns the further down the funnel the consumer goes. And it becomes stronger than other channels at increased frequencies. That's not surprising, especially considering the research outlined last week on how the brain processes print information.

*This is part 2 of a three-part weekly series examining magazine advertising today, sponsored by MPA. Next week, we will detail the MPA's new Print Magazine Sales Guarantee. All of this and more will be presented at the 2016 American Magazine Media Conference, February 1-2, 2016. Details at [magazine.org](http://magazine.org).*

# Print Magazines Work: We Guarantee It

Increase brand sales and get a positive ROI

**H**ow confident are magazine publishers that print has a significant role in multi-platform brand campaigns? They're now guaranteeing that advertising in print magazines will increase an advertiser's brand sales and provide a positive ROI. Recently, MPA—The Association of Magazine Media instituted the Print Magazine Sales Guarantee, the first time in media that an industry is doing this. We sat down with MPA's new president and CEO Linda Thomas Brooks to get the lowdown behind the bold move.

## **This is a daring initiative for a media industry? Why did you do it?**

There's a lot of noise in the advertising and media space and we wanted to do something bold that would get noticed. Over the years, we've been able to show that magazine audiences are growing and that print is still a highly compelling medium for advertisers. It's time for us to put our money where our mouth is and create accountability for our claims that print magazines will connect with consumers and provide a positive ROI for all print magazine investments. It's one thing to say we're confident in our performance. It's quite another to have an industry-wide money-back or space-back guarantee.

## **It's not a ploy to get additional ad dollars?**

Hardly. We definitely want to see an increase in print magazine ad spend, and what better way to encourage that than to guarantee results. Time and again, we see that print magazines are a major brand catalyst in multi-platform advertising buys. And with advertisers moving dollars to digital, we want to be sure that this doesn't come at the expense of print, especially with all the evidence that engagement with traditional print is greater than engagement with new media.

## **There must be some stiff requirements.**

Not at all. First, the products and brands

in the campaign must have third-party trackable sales data. Second, the advertiser must buy a minimum of 150 GRPs within one magazine media company over 12 months, with that buy reflecting a year-over-year increase in business. Media buyers can get all the details from the MPA.

## **How can you be so confident this will work?**

Time Inc., Hearst Magazines, Condé Nast and Meredith Corp. have all conducted similar programs over the past several years. And their results have been consistently positive. Meredith launched its print magazine and ROI guarantee back in 2011. All of the more than 35 campaigns conducted—without exception—have shown that advertising in print magazine drives both sales and ROI. For the initial brands, which included Kimberly-Clark and Tyson Foods, the ads helped produce sales increases of between 2 percent and 47 percent, with the average ROI being \$7.45 for every \$1 spent.

## **Pretty impressive figures.**

It's not surprising to us. We've seen the data. Print magazines, by virtue of their tangibility, permanence and ability to engage consumers without distraction, have unique value. We're not just making the claim. We're backing it up.

## **How come you're not guaranteeing digital advertising ROI?**

We'd love to. You know, Nielsen research demonstrates that digital ROI for magazine brands exceeds those of other digital advertising vehicles. And some of our

members have conducted integrated print/digital studies with positive results. But we don't yet have the volume of studies for the needed benchmarks to do something industry-wide. Once we do, we'll roll out an integrated program too.

## **Why aren't other media doing this?**

Nobody's going to show their cards unless they're holding the winning hand. Our numbers are strong. It's harder for other media because their ROIs are less robust on average, and the risks that an ROI will be negative is higher. But don't take our word for it. Ask them.

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